5

Priority Setting

Health Issues

Process

The process of ranking pressing health issues for the Community Health Assessment involved several steps. Community members participated in the ranking priorities through community meetings and an online prioritization survey. A panel of public health professionals, academic researchers and graduate students were also assembled to prioritize data using the Hanlon prioritization method.

Community Ranking of Health Issues

The first step included a community ranking process. Participants at Guilford County community meetings, two meetings outside of Guilford County but within the hospital partner service areas (Reidsville in Rockingham County and Archdale/Trinity and Randolph County) as well as participants in an online survey reviewed data on a set of indicators of Morbidity and Mortality, Health Behaviors, Clinical Care, Social and Economic Factors and Environmental Factors.

Guilford County Residents Ranked

Morbidity and Mortality
1. Premature death
2. Chronic disease mortality
3. Poor or fair health
4. Poor physical health days
5. Poor mental health days
6. Low birth weight babies

Health Behaviors
7. Adult smoking
8. Adult obesity
9. Physical inactivity
10. Excessive drinking
11. Sexually transmitted infections
12. Motor vehicle crash death rate
13. Teen birth rate

Clinical Care
14. Uninsured
15. Primary care physicians
16. Preventive hospital stays
17. Diabetic screening
18. Mammography screening

Social and Economic Factors
19. High school graduation
20. Completed some college
21. Unemployment
22. Children in poverty
23. Inadequate social support
24. Children in single-parent families
25. Violent crime rate

Environmental Factors
26. Air pollution particulate matter days
27. Air pollution ozone days
28. Access to recreational facilities
29. Limited access to healthy food
30. Fast food restaurants

The form reproduced here was utilized for the community meetings to rank health issues.

2012 Community Health Assessment Health Issue Prioritization

2012 Community Health Assessment Health Issue Prioritization

Your input is needed in order to help identify health-related issues that are of greatest importance to the health of community residents. Pressing health issues will be addressed through a community action planning process. For each of the following health issues please circle a number from 1-5, where 1 = little importance and 5 = extremely important.

Health Issues	Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Moderate Importance	Very Important	Extremely Important
Morbidity and Mortality					
1. Premature death	1	2	3	4	5
2. Chronic disease mortality	1	2	3	4	5
3. Poor or fair health	1	2	3	4	5
4. Poor physical health days	1	2	3	4	5
5. Poor mental health days	1	2	3	4	5
6. Low birth weight babies	1	2	3	4	5
Health Behaviors					
7. Adult smoking	1	2	3	4	5
8. Adult obesity	1	2	3	4	5
9. Physical inactivity	1	2	3	4	5
10. Excessive drinking	1	2	3	4	5
11. Sexually transmitted infections	1	2	3	4	5
12. Motor vehicle crash death rate	1	2	3	4	5
13. Teen birth rate	1	2	3	4	5
Clinical Care					
14. Uninsured	1	2	3	4	5
15. Primary care physicians	1	2	3	4	5
16. Preventive hospital stays	1	2	3	4	5
17. Diabetic screening	1	2	3	4	5
18. Mammography screening	1	2	3	4	5
Social and Economic Factors					
19. High school graduation	1	2	3	4	5
20. Completed some college	1	2	3	4	5
21. Unemployment	1	2	3	4	5
22. Children in poverty	1	2	3	4	5
23. Inadequate social support	1	2	3	4	5
24. Children in single-parent families	1	2	3	4	5
25. Violent crime rate	1	2	3	4	5
Physical Environment					
26. Air pollution particulate matter days	1	2	3	4	5
27. Air pollution ozone days	1	2	3	4	5
28. Access to recreational facilities	1	2	3	4	5
29. Limited access to healthy food	1	2	3	4	5
30. Fast food restaurants	1	2	3	4	5

The results of the community ranking are as follows (Overall N = 158):

Community Ranking Results

Health-Related Issue	Average Score	Rank
Child poverty	4.61	1
Unemployment	4.52	2
Adult obesity	4.48	3
Lack of health insurance	4.42	4
Low access to healthy food	4.39	5
Chronic disease	4.36	6
Violent crime	4.29	7
Lack of physical activity	4.23	8
High school graduation	4.22	9
Sexually transmitted infections	4.18	10
Low birth weight	4.12	11
Primary care physicians	4.11	12
Teen births	4.1	13
Adult smoking	4.04	14
No social support	4.02	15
Fair or poor self-rated health	3.97	16
Premature mortality	3.95	17
Fast food restaurants	3.93	18
Diabetic screening	3.9	19
Air quality ozone days	3.89	20
Excessive drinking	3.88	21
Mammography screening	3.87	22
Preventable hospital stays	3.79	23
Poor self-rated mental health days	3.77	24
Recreation	3.76	25
Single-parent households	3.75	26
Air quality particulate matter days	3.7	27
Poor self-rated physical health days	3.67	28
Completed some college	3.59	29
Motor vehicle mortality	3.59	30

Hanlon Prioritization

To gain additional perspective on the health issues, an additional prioritization approach was utilized. On Friday, April 12, 2013, an expert panel of 11 public health professionals from the Guilford County Department of Public Health and academic researchers and graduate students met to rank health issues using the Hanlon Prioritization method. The Hanlon method is a respected approach to health issue prioritization that takes into account the size or magnitude of a health issue, the severity of the health issue and the feasibility of addressing the issue.

Developed by J.J. Hanlon, the *Hanlon Method for Prioritizing Health Problems* is a commonly-used assessment technique which takes into consideration explicitly defined criteria and feasibility factors. The Hanlon Method is advantageous when the desired outcome is an objective list of health priorities based on baseline data and

numerical values. The Hanlon approach compares health indicators against specified criteria. Participants are asked to rank, on a scale of from 0 through 10, each health problem or issue on the criteria of 1) size of problem, 2) magnitude of health problem and 3) effectiveness of potential interventions. The seriousness of the health problem is multiplied by two because it is weighted as being twice as important as the size of the problem. Based on the priority scores calculated, ranks are assigned to health problems. Below is an example of the form used for the Hanlon prioritization meeting.

Health Problem/Indicator	A Size	B Seriousness	C Effectiveness of Intervention	D Priority Score (A+2B)C	Rank
Morbidity and Mortality					
Chronic disease (Includes heart disease, cancer, diabetes, asthma)					
Sexually transmitted diseases (includes HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia)					
Poor birth outcomes (includes infant mortality, low and very low birth weight, and premature birth)					
Health Behaviors					
Obesity, nutrition and physical inactivity					
Tobacco use					
Teen pregnancy					
Clinical Care					
Access to clinical care, including physical and mental health (includes insurance coverage, number of providers, transportation, care coordination/navigation, health education)					
Social and Economic Determinants of Health					
Poverty and unemployment					
Violent crime					
Educational attainment (increase % completing high school, increase % completing college and higher)					
Physical Environment					
Limited access to healthy food (includes problems of food deserts, food insecurity)					

Table title: **Hanlon Method for Prioritizing Health Problems**

The two tables below provide a comparison of the top ten health-related issues for the community prioritization ranking and the Hanlon Prioritization ranking.

Community Ranking

Community Ranking Top Ten Issues	
Health-Related Issue	Rank
Child poverty	1
Unemployment	2
Adult obesity	3
Lack of health insurance	4
Low access to healthy food	5
Chronic disease	6
Violent crime	7
Lack of physical activity	8
High school graduation	9
Sexually transmitted infections	10

Hanlon Ranking

Hanlon Ranking Top Ten Issues	
Health-Related Issue	Rank
Chronic disease	1
Teen pregnancy	2
Obesity, nutrition and physical inactivity	3
Sexually transmitted infections	4
Tobacco use	5
Access to healthy food	6
Poor birth outcomes	7
Access to clinical care	8
Violent crime	9
Poverty and unemployment	10

Synthesizing Community Rankings and Hanlon Rankings

Community Ranking (Top Ten Issues)	Hanlon Ranking (Top Ten Issues)
Health Outcomes: Morbidity and Mortality	
(6) Chronic Disease	(1) Chronic Disease
(10) Sexually Transmitted Infections	(4) Sexually Transmitted Infections
	(7) Poor Birth Outcomes
Health Behaviors	
(3) Obesity	(3) Obesity, Nutrition and Physical Activity
(8) Physical Activity	(2) Teen Pregnancy
	(5) Tobacco Use
Clinical Care	
(4) Lack of Insurance	(8) Access to Clinical Care (includes physical and mental health and lack of insurance)
Social and Economic Factors	
(1) Poverty	(10) Poverty and Unemployment
(2) Unemployment	
(7) Violent Crime	(9) Violent Crime
(9) Education Attainment	
Environmental Factors	
(5) Access to Healthy Food	(6) Access to Healthy Food

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